

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Joint Meeting
Game and Fish Regional Office, Casper, Wyoming
September 12, 2008

Board of Agriculture Present:

Gene Hardy, President
Joe Thomas, Vice President Jim Bennage
Jack Corson
Dave Graham
John Hansen
Bridget Kukowski
John Etchepare, Director
Juan Reyes
Excused: Jim Mickelson,
Patrick Zimmerer, Dalin Winters,
Ryan Lance, Frank Galey, UW Dean of
the College of Agriculture
Staff: Muff Parker, Recording Secretary,
Jason Fearneyhough, Deputy Director,
Leanne Stevenson, Justin Williams, Chris
Wichmann, and Jessica Crowder

Game & Fish Commission Present:

Jerry Galles, President
Cliff Kirk, Vice President
Clark Allan
Fred Lindzey
Ron Lovercheck
Ed Mignery
Bill Williams
Staff: Gregg Arthur, Teresa Cole, Connie
Coleman, John Emmerich, Mark Fowden,
John Kennedy, Eric Keszler, Jay Lawson,
Linda Lembeck, Glenn Pauley, Richard
Reynders, Mike Stone and Scott Talbott
Guests: See attached list

Bob Budd, Facilitator, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and explained the purpose of the meeting was to seek commonalities on several key issues identified by the Wyoming Board of Agriculture and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. The Board and Commission members each introduced themselves.

Wolf Management

Scott Talbott, Wildlife Division Assistant Chief, and Justin Williams, Agriculture Program Coordinator, each gave briefings on behalf of their Departments on wolf management in Wyoming and the key issues of each Department. Board/Commission discussions followed.

Mr. Budd identified the common goals of doing whatever needed to be done to gain delisting of the gray wolf, agreement that wolf management was workable, and management funding was a key concern.

He identified the Game and Fish Commission and Board of Agriculture as two prestigious and strong Boards in the state, and recommended a subgroup of each Board and some staff members to discuss the following:

- The entire issue of delisting and how both Departments could work together with the Office of the Attorney General to form a united front, and
- The statewide classification status of the wolf – a review and discussion should probably take place.

Snaring Statutes

Leanne Stevenson, Natural Resources Policy Manager, discussed the vital predator management practice of snares, and noted they are low-cost and effective. She supported implementation of Rules and Regulations, rather than statute, to minimize nontarget take. Jay Lawson, Wildlife Division Chief, agreed, but advised there had been an increase during the last few years of nontarget take, including livestock, wildlife and dogs. He identified the main point of concern was the check requirement and education on the proper use of snares, and recommended check requirements of no more than seven days. Both recommended that specifics be removed from the draft statute, followed by Game and Fish addressing specifics through Rules and Regulations.

The concept of trapping/snare tags was discussed, along with ways to assure education of snare use. The Trappers' Association has agreed to put on educational courses, and the Game and Fish Department is prepared to put together some educational materials. A snaring education certificate could be issued, similar to a Hunter Education card, and certification could be available by internet or in person.

The Board chairs will engage in a discussion on what form of licensure/certification would be most appropriate.

Access to Private Land for Hunting and Fishing

Scott Talbott and Jessica Crowder, Natural Resources and Policy Senior Analyst, each gave briefings on behalf of their Departments. Each had positive things to say about the Hunter Management Area program, with landowners receiving compensation, land management information and enforcement, and giving Game and Fish the opportunity to offer access for hunting and fishing in the state while maintaining appropriate wildlife management. The major concern identified was a source of funding. The program could increase substantially, but cannot due to lack of funding for landowner payment and staffing.

Mr. Budd noted everyone was in radical agreement regarding access with just a few problems, and questioned whether a funding base should be elevated through legislature or some other way, rather than sportsman driven. He identified the shortfall as habitat funding, and suggested a subgroup to work on this between the two Departments/Boards.

Instream Flow

Mike Stone, Fish Division Chief, and Chris Wichmann, Natural Resources and Policy Senior Analyst, each gave briefings on behalf of their Departments.

Discussion followed with concurrence to support maintenance of the current law (with no changes). Mr. Budd recommended the two Boards think about efficiency, and gave the example of the watershed study in central Wyoming such as the use of lining or piping to prevent water loss, more efficient irrigation practices, and invasive species removal along streams.

Sage Grouse and Sensitive Species Management

John Emmerich and Justin Williams each gave briefings on behalf of their Departments. Discussion followed on the importance to both Departments of the Sage Grouse Local Working Groups, the need for lek information to avoid delisting, landowner concerns if they do share information and the importance of reporting dead grouse to monitor for West Nile Virus.

Director Ferrell asked that everyone remain cognizant that the two Departments might not be the ones causing friction – it could frequently be the involvement of a third party such as the court system or outside pressure points.

Mr. Budd hoped the Commissions/Boards would contact each other in the future.

The two Board/Commission Chairs agreed to identify one or two key items resulting from this meeting, and form subcommittees to pursue those issues.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Jerry Galles, Commission President

Gene Hardy, Board of Ag President

Date

Date